

VOL. II.

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NO. 5.

THE  
PLATONIST.

An Exponent of the Philosophic Truth.

EDITED BY

THOS. M. JOHNSON.



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*How charming is Divine Philosophy!  
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose;  
But musical as Apollo's lute,  
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,  
Where no crude surfeit reigns.*

ORANGE, N. J.

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N. B.—A pamphlet edition of THE SOUL by A. Wilder has been printed. Price, 15 cents single copies.

# The Platonist.

"Platonism is immortal because its principles are immortal in the Human Intellect and Heart."  
Esoteric Christianity is identical with True Philosophy.

VOL. II.

ORANGE, N. J., MAY, 1884.

No. 5.

## TO THE SUN :

Considered as when rising, attended by the Powers that preside over the Planetary Spheres, and the four Elements.

BY THOMAS TAYLOR.

[This Hymn is reprinted from the *Monthly Magazine* for October, 1798, where it first appeared. It is also contained in Taylor's *Collectanea*, which was published in 1806.]

### I.

Tethys from hoary Ocean's deeps  
Now climbs Olympus' shining steeps,  
T' attend the god of day;  
And frees the steeds that panting wait  
Thro' sacred Light's resplendent gate  
To wing their spacious way.

### II.

Aurora, daughter of the Dawn,  
Has sprinkled now the dewy lawn  
With rays of rosy light;  
Apollō, crown'd with fire, is seen  
Emerging now, with dazzling mien,  
From Tartarus and Night.

### III.

Armies of gods and daemons round  
Now bursting from the dark profound,  
In solemn silence stand;  
And from his lips, with mental speed,  
Ere words of power immense proceed,  
Anticipate command.

### IV.

The gods that roll the starry spheres,  
And lead on hours, and days, and years,  
A shining synod form;  
With those in fire and air who ride,  
O'er winds and thunders who preside,  
Or rule the raging storm.

### V.

Before, behind, around the God,  
Eager to mark his awful nod,  
And pleas'd his course t' attend,  
With eyes undazzl'd, by that light,  
Whose beams o'erpower e'en angel's sight,  
See gods adoring bend.

### VI.

Thron'd in a radiant amber car,  
And scattering milder light from far,  
See first great Dian comes,  
And, hark! as deck'd with starry light,  
Foremost proceeds the queen of night,  
Loud rattle Rhea's drums.

### VII.

Gay Hermēs next, fair Maia's son,  
Glad round the king of light to run,  
And borne by fiery steeds—

The God, who mounts the wing'd winds,  
Fast to his feet his pinions binds,  
And gods ministrant leads.

### VIII.

The car of Venus, drawn by doves,  
While close behind the Smiles and Loves,  
A blooming band are seen;  
In order next attends the God,  
Whose will is law, and fate his nod,  
And bears bright beauty's queen.

### IX.

See next advance terrific Mars,  
Who joys in uproar, ruin, wars,  
With lance deep-bathed in gore—  
Fear, Fury, Flight, beside him stand,  
Prompt to fulfill his dread command,  
His gold-rein'd steeds before.

### X.

But, lo! the mighty Power\* appears  
Who guides the largest of the spheres  
That round Apollō run—  
See! how along sublimely roll'd,  
By brass-hoof'd steeds with manes of gold,  
He hails the sovereign Sun.

### XI.

To close the band, Time's hoary fire,†  
Who rides on guards of mental fire,‡  
His wing'd chariot cites;  
Slow through the shining tracts of Heav'n,  
By dragons drawn, the God is driv'n  
From steep Olympian heights.

### XII.

Each Dryad of the shady wood,  
Each Sister of the silver flood,  
With these well-pleased advance;  
Around creation's seven-ray'd‡ king,  
In strain that ravish Tart'rus sings,  
In mystic measures dance.

### XIII.

Glad earth perceives, and kindly pours  
Unbidden herbs, spontaneous flow'rs,  
And forests tow'ring rise;  
Old Ocean stills his raging deeps,  
And Darkness flies, and Discord sleeps,  
And laugh th' exulting Skies.

### XIV.

Let Nature's tribes, with gen'ral voice,  
Unceasing in the God rejoice,  
Who pours the blaze of day;  
Rocks, hills, and vales, one chorus raise,  
Men, beasts, and birds, resound his praise,  
And bless his vivid ray.

\* Zeus. † Saturn. ‡ This is asserted of Saturn in the Chaldaic Theology. See my *Version of the Chaldaic Oracles*.

## IAMBLICHOS: ON THE MYSTERIES.

A NEW TRANSLATION, BY ALEXANDER WILDER.

## PART III.

## ORACLES OF APOLLÔ.

XI.—Another form of entheast divining, very famous and plain to the understanding, that of oracles, is exhibited in various ways; concerning which you give the following description: "Others are so affected by drinking water, as for example, the priest of the Klarian Apollo at Kolophôn; others by sitting above a little aperture in the ground, as the inspired women at Delphi; others by breathing a peculiar exhalation from water, as for example, the prophetic women at Branchidai."

You have not mentioned these three oracles by name, because there are only these, for there are many more which you have passed over. But since these are distinguished above the others, and because at the same time by diligent endeavor to know these you will be sufficiently instructed concerning the manner of divination sent to mankind from the divinities, I suppose, therefore, that you were content with them. We will also, therefore, discourse about these three oracles and say nothing of the numerous other ones.

## THE ORACULAR FOUNTAIN OF KOLOPHÔN.

It is acknowledged, then, by every body that the oracle in Kolophôn gives its responses by the agency of water. There is a fountain in a house under ground and the prophet drinks from it. On certain appointed nights, there having been many sacred rites performed beforehand, he drinks and utters the oracles, but is not seen by the spectators present. It is manifest from this, therefore, that the water possesses the oracular quality; but how this is the case every man may not know, as the proverb says. It seems, indeed, that a peculiar oracular spirit is disseminated through it; but this is not actually true. The divine principle does not thus diffuse itself in its recipients by division and apportionment; but as though it was from an external source, and it illuminates the fountain, filling it from itself with the prophetic energy. The inspiration which the water possesses in this case is not all from the divinity, but it only produces a favorable condition and a clarifying of the light-like spirit\* in us through which we become able to receive the divinity. Indeed, the presence of the divinity is diverse and prior to this, and flashing in like lightning from above. In fact, this very manifestation is absent from no one of those who are affiliated to it by intimate relationship. But it becomes equally present and makes use of the prophet as its organ; he being neither himself, nor understanding anything which he utters, or where he is; so that after the giving of the oracles he scarcely recollects himself. But, indeed, before the drinking he fasts on these occasions the whole day and night, and he secludes himself in certain sacred places not accessible to the multitude, as he begins to become entheast; so by the withdrawal and separation from human affairs, he becomes unsullied and ready for the recep-

\* Mr. Thomas Taylor, in his note upon this passage refers to the *Treatise of Plutarchos Upon the Failure of the Oracles*, where this matter is discussed with admirable perspicuity. The faculty of divining, this author declares, is farthest withdrawn from this present state of things, by means of that idiosyncrasy of body which favors the producing of the entheast condition, "just as when Plato says that we see because the luminous principle of the eye is mixed with the radiance of the sun, and that we hear by the percussion of the air. Yet this does not hinder but that we have the faculty of seeing and hearing from the Divine Providence." The soul seems to mix and unite itself with the mantic exhalation when the two happen to be in a sort of harmony and proportion with each other. "We do not separate the faculty of divination either from God or from Reason, for we assign the Human Soul for its subject and the entheastic exaltation for its instrument."

tion of the divinity. In other words, he, through these means, possesses the inspiration of the divinity shining into the pure sanctuary (*εδρα*) of his own soul; he exhibits the entheasm without any impediment in himself, and the presence of the divinity complete and unmolested.

## THE INTERPRETER OF APOLLO AT DELPHI.

The prophetess at Delphi, whether she gives oracular responses to men from a tenuous and fire-like spirit brought up from somewhere through an aperture, or whether she vaticinates seated in the inner shrine upon a bronze chair having three feet, or whether upon the four-footed chair which is set apart to the divinity, she thus gives herself over absolutely to the divine spirit, and is shone upon by the ray from the fire. Indeed, when the fire coming up from the aperture abundantly and in mass, envelops her all around in a circle, she is filled by its divine light. But when she places herself upon the divine seat she becomes firmly joined to the prophetic power of the divinity. From both of these preparations she becomes wholly the god's. Then, indeed, is the god present with her causing her to shine in a distinct light other than that which is of the fire, the spirit, their shrines, and the visible fixtures about the place, both natural and holy.

## THE PROPHETESS OF APOLLO AT BRANCHIDAI.\*

The woman, likewise, who chants the oracular responses at Branchidai,—whether she holds a staff given first by some divinity, and is filled by the divine light; or whether she sits upon a wheel and predicts the future; or whether she wets her feet or the border of her robe in the water, or receives the divinity by inhaling the vapor from the water,—by all these means she renders herself fit for the receiving, and partakes of him externally.

These things are manifest, namely: the multitude of the offerings, the established law of the entire sacred observance, and such other things as are performed in connection with the oracle prior to the chanting of the responses, such as: the baths of the prophetess, her fast for three whole days, her abiding by herself in the interior shrine, and there receiving and enjoying the illumination for a long time. These very things all show that the divinity is desired by entreaty to become near, that he exhibits his presence externally, and that she, before she takes her position in the accustomed place, receives an inspiration of a wonderful character; and that in the very spiritual emanation which is brought up from the fountain, there is revealed another God more ancient, distinct from space, who is at once the Master of space, of the earth itself, and the whole technic of divining.

XII.—It appears, therefore, that divination by oracles corresponds with all the hypotheses which we have put forth in relation to the technic of divining. For, if a faculty of this kind was inseparable from the physical constitution of the places and bodies where it exists, and issued forth according to an activity circumscribed by number, it could not always

\* Branchidai, or more correctly Didymea, was situated near Miletos, in Ionia. The temple, the ruins of which still exist, was one of the most ancient in Asia minor. It was twice burned by the Persians and rebuilt. The structure was, in the Ionic order, but a straight road which led from it to the sea, was bordered on each side with statues on chairs of a single block of stone, with the feet close together and the hands on the knees, precisely like the avenues of the temples of Egypt. It is suggestive, therefore, of a similar origin.

† The staff or rod as the symbol or instrument of power, is of the greatest antiquity. It appears in mythology, in the sceptre of Zeus charged with lightning, the caduceus of Hermès which awoke or lulled to sleep the soul, the thyrsus of Bacchus, the staff of Asklepios, and even the club of Héraklēs. The chiefs of the tribes of Israel are said to have had rods, those of Moses and Aaron displaying extraordinary powers. Every Roman senator bore a wand. The magic wand of Kirkē, the divining staffs of the Hindu sages and Tuscan augurs, and the crozier of the bishops are of the same character.

know beforehand in like manner on every occasion. But being separate and free from places and things measured by the enumerations of time, and from things supported by space, it is equally present with objects everywhere, and it is at the same moment with all things produced in Time. It likewise collects in one the truth which is universally diffused, by virtue of its own distinct and preponderating essence.

#### THE ENTHEASTIC FACULTY NOT DIVIDED

If, indeed, we have set forth these things rightly, the prophetic faculty of Divinity is not comprehended in parts by any thing, neither by space nor by a divisible human body, nor by a soul which is held fast in a single form of partible qualities. Being separate and indivisible, it is present entire with those everywhere that are able to partake of it. It also shines from without upon and fills all things, goes forth through all the elements, occupies both earth and air, fire and water, and leaves nothing without a share of its substance, neither of living beings nor of those sustained in the world of nature. On the other hand it gives forth from itself an allotment of fore-knowledge, to serve in a greater and others in a less degree. Existing itself before all things, it is rendered sufficient by this, its very separateness, to fill all, according as every one is able to enjoy it.

#### EMPLOYMENT OF "BLACK MAGIC."

XIII.—Let us therefore now view another form of divination, private and not public, in regard to which you say: "Some even by standing upon indented marks, as though they had been filled from an insinuation of spiritual influx." This mode, because of those who employ it improperly, is not easy to comprehend in a single explanation. On the other hand, it is ready at hand and unduly fashionable, known by many, and making use of falsehood and deception not to be borne with. There is no god whatever present, but it produces an activity of the soul which is like the gods and draws from them an indistinct and image-like apparition, which because of its evanescent nature is wont to be disturbed by the breathings of a low grade of spirits.

When there happens to be a real manifestation of Divine beings, it is always in other respects, without taint and pure, unchangeable, genuine, and both inaccessible and unimpeded by adverse spiritual influences. As the darkness is not from its nature able to remain under the blazing sunshine, but suddenly becomes entirely invisible, recedes completely from where it was, and takes itself out of the way; so, also, when the power of the gods shines forth from many directions, filling all things with its benefits, the commotion of evil spirits has no region of action, nor is able to manifest itself in any way. Accordingly it falls back as nothing into non-existence, and has no power of motion in any respect when the superior beings are present, nor is it able to disturb them when they are giving forth light.\*

Whereas, therefore, there is such a difference of both these classes of beings, I will make use of no other tokens to distinguish them than those which were mentioned by you. When

\*Proklos explains that when the initiations are taking place, as in spiritual manifestations generally, baser spirits will assume the guise of the superior genii, and so attract away such souls as are not yet become pure. This was a common incident of the Eleusinian observances. Hence the *Chaldaean Oracles* declare that it is not well to contemplate them till after complete purification. "They enchant the souls and lead them away from the initiatory rites." Proklos says again: "In the most sacred of the Initiatory Observances [the Eleusinia], they say that the initiates first encounter the multiformed and many-shaped races which make their appearance before the gods appear; but they go on into the mystic cave unswerving and made secure by the initiatory rites, they receive the divine illumination without alloy into their bosoms, and being stripped, so to say, they partake of the divine nature. This, I think, is what takes place in the spectacular vision."

you say: "Some standing upon indented marks," you seem to signify nothing else than the cause of all the evils in relation to these things. For there are some who disregard the whole matter of the sacred vision at the celebration of the Mysteries, both in regard to the one invoking the divinity, and the seer. They hold in contempt the order of religious observance and the most holy encountering of prolonged trials; and renouncing the sacred laws and ordinances, and the other holy rites, they consider the standing on indented marks to be enough alone. They believe that at a single time when they do this, a spiritual influence is evolved. Yet how can anything excellent or perfect take place from these things? How may the eternal and real essence of Divinity be combined in sacred acts with temporary performances? These inconsiderate men, therefore, go entirely astray by means of these things, nor are they worthy to be enumerated among diviners.

#### VARIOUS MODES OF DIVINATION.

XIV.—In regard to another order of divination you say: "Others who are perfectly conscious in regard to themselves become entheast through the power of Fancy; others employ darkness as an aid to produce the condition; others make use of certain drinks and others are influenced by chants and dramatic compositions.\* Some experience the manifestation through a peculiar influence of water,\* others in the niche of a wall, others in the open air, and others in the presence of the Sun or some other heavenly luminary." All this kind of Divination which you mention as being of numerous species, may be comprehended in a single faculty, which may be named the BRINGING OF LIGHT. It, also, in a degree, illuminates with a divine glory the æther-like and luminous vehicle which surrounds the soul, the divine impressions from which seize upon the power of fancy in us, made active by the willing of the gods. For the whole life of the soul and all the faculties in it being subject to the divine beings, are set in operation in whatever manner the leaders will them.

This happens in two ways; either the gods are present with the soul, or they diffuse into it a certain light in advance from themselves. According to either mode, however, the divine presence and the illumination are entirely distinct. The attentive and the reasoning faculty of the soul are closely associated with the events, since the divine light does not become entheast, because it is awakened not by itself but by the gods to the several forms of imagination, it varying totally itself from the common way of men.

Since, however, the contrary is receptive of its contrary, by a principle of transition and alienation from itself, and that which is homogeneous and akin is likewise recipient through similarity, it is natural on account of these things, that the light-bringers should both take the darkness as a colleague and also taking the light of the sun, moon, or in short, the hypæthral ray, employ it for illumination.

Sometimes, also, they make use of preparations of certain substances, peculiar to the gods that are about to become manifest, or chants or dramatic compositions; these being suitably prepared both for the condition of reception, and also the presence and manifestation of the gods. Sometimes, again, they conduct the light through water, as this is transparent and so well adapted for its reception. At other times they cause it to shine in a wall, having made a station for the light in the wall most excellently with sacred delineations of

\* Greek, *συστράσσεις*.

\* Damaskios relates the following instance: "There was a sacred woman that possessed the divinely-gifted nature to a most remarkable degree. Having poured clean water into a certain glass cup, she would perceive in the water within the cup the representations of things about to take place, and from the vision would predict with certainty what would be. The proof of this matter, however, is not hidden from us."

engraved figures ; yet at the same time they fix it firmly in a solid place so that it may not be too much diffused.

There are many other modes for the bringing of the light, but they may all alike be reduced to one, namely : into its shining, in whatever way and through whatever instruments the gods may shine forth. Whereas, therefore, it is from without and possess everything as being subordinate to the will and intelligence of Divinity ; it has what is most important, a sacred, glowing light, shining from the æthereal region on high and from the air, whether of the moon or of the sun, or some other heavenly sphere. It is manifest, therefore, from all these things that such a mode of divination is free, primal and worthy of the gods.

#### THE TECHNIC OF AUGURY.

XV.—Come, then, let us proceed to the mode which is accomplished by means of a human method, and involves much conjecture and opinion. You speak concerning this as follows : " Some have instituted the technic of divining the future by examination of entrails, the motion of birds and stars." There are, indeed, many established technics of this kind, but these alone are sufficient to exhibit every technical form of divination. So, therefore, to tell the whole, this method employs divine signs, which in various ways have been made complete by the gods. The technic gathers up the conclusions from the irrefragable divine tokens according to the kindred relationship of the things accomplished to the signs manifested, and so guesses out the augury, having inferred it from certain probabilities. The gods, therefore, prepare the signs through the agency of Nature, she being herself subservient to the coming into existence of everything common or specific ; or else, through the agency of the dæmons operating in the region of transition, who take control of the planetary world, particular substances and, in short, of every living thing, and produce the phenomena with ease in whatever way is pleasing to the gods. They manifest the purpose of the divinity by symbols and shape the future, as set forth by Hèrakleitos, " not speaking nor conceding, but indicating by signs." So, therefore, by means of foreshowing they indicate the mode of operation. As then, they engender everything by the agency of ideal forms, so they declare beforehand through instituted tokens. Probably, they also by this means quicken our sagacity into greater acuteness. Let these things be laid down by us in common in regard to the whole of this technic which men have devised.

#### EXAMINATION OF ENTRAILS AND FLIGHT OF BIRDS.

XVI.—In particular, however, the soul of animals, the demon set over them, the air, the motion of the air, and the revolution of the sky, make various changes of the intestines as is pleasing to the gods. One sign is, that they are many times found without a heart, or in some other way dismembered of some of the principal parts, the loss of which renders it not at all possible to continue life in the animals. The impulse of their own nature ( $\psi\chi\eta$ ) actuates the birds. The guardian dæmon of the animals also set them in motion. The circulation of the air, and the potential force which descends from the heavens into the air, making everything harmonious with the divine purposes, leads on the birds conformably with what the gods ordered originally. The most important sign of this is that they many times rupture and destroy themselves, which is not naturally a thing for any creature to do ; but this is a supernatural act, so that it is something else accomplishing these things by means of the birds.

#### AUGURY BY THE STARS.

Moreover, the courses of the stars come near to the eter-

nal revolutions of the sky, not only in space but in **potentia** forces and in the shedding forth of light. They are **set in motion** in whatever way the gods of the sky compel. The most absolutely pure and supreme principle of the air is **closely affiliated** to fire, and at once as the gods nod assent, it is **immediately kindled**. If any one thinks that certain emanations of the heavenly bodies are given forth into the air, he will **not conjecture** anything alien to what is often performed in the **divine technic**. The oneness and mutual participation\* of **everything** and the simultaneous action of the parts most **distant** as though they were nearest and of one living being, **cause** the sending of these signs from the gods to man, first **through** the air, and there appearing in sight to human beings.

#### DIVINITY DISTINCT FROM ITS WORKS.

This, then, becomes manifest from what has **been said**, namely : that the gods, making use of many **intermediary instrumentalities**, send forth signs to men, employing the **services** of demons, souls, and the whole world of nature ; and that they are the leaders from the first beginning of all these their followers throughout the universe, and transmit the **impulse** which goes forth from them whithersoever they will. Being themselves distinct from everything and free from all relationship and common nature with the things in the world of transition, they lead everything in the region of transition and nature according to their own purpose.

This explanation in regard to the technic of divination agrees, therefore, with the theory of the function and providence of the gods. It is not a drawing down of the higher intellect of the superior orders to this region and to ourselves, but on the other hand, this intellect remaining in itself stable, turns to itself the entire technic of divination, and finds them proceeding from it.

XVII.—You next "enquire in regard to the mode of oracular utterances : What is it and what is its nature?" We have explained this already, both generally and specifically. First of all you submit the proposition : " The inspired individuals all declare that it is through gods or spiritual beings ( $\delta\alpha\mu\sigma\tau\omega\tau$ ) that they obtain foreknowledge of what is to take place ; and that others do not perceive it except those who have power over the future." Then you express the doubt : " Whether the divine nature has ever been brought into such subserviency to human beings as not to be reluctant to assist those who practice fortune-telling with meal." You do not, however, understand aright the wealth of resources of the Divine Power, the goodness which transcends all bounds, and the causality which comprehends everything, when you denominate the care and protection of us **subserviency**. Besides, you ignore the mode of energy, namely : that it is not attracted down nor turned to us, but distinctly goes before and gives itself to its participants. Nevertheless, it does not itself go out from itself nor become less, nor become subservient to its participants ; but on the contrary, it makes use of all as its own servants.

The present halting appears to me to go wrong in another particular. Taking for granted that the works of the gods are like those wrought by men, it disputes in relation to them how they exist. Because we are changed and sometimes are involved with the passive conditions of the things of which we have control and management, you conjecture wrongly, therefore, that the power of the gods is subservient to those

\* Greek  $\sigma\mu\pi\alpha\theta\epsilon\alpha$ . Synesios explains this word as follows : " Everything feeling alike and thinking in accord. Do parts belong to each other as chance to be parts of a single whole?"

† There are three modes of oracular utterance : Prophetic inspiration, vaticination, and natural acumen. The former two are alike in principle, but differ specifically. The dæmons or spiritual beings here mentioned are the *angels* of Semitic and Christian Theology.

who are guided in the right way by them. On the contrary, it is never attracted down to its participants, either in the creation of universes, or in the foreknowledge of the region of transition, or in divination in respect to it, but it imparts good to all similar to itself. It benefits ungrudgingly those who are under its authority; and the more it remains by itself by so much the more is it filled with its own perfection. Certainly it does not become changed into the nature of its participants, but it causes its recipients to partake of its peculiar boons. It also preserves them absolutely, but at the same time remains perfect in itself and includes them in itself, but is neither prevailed over nor encompassed by any one of them. In vain, therefore, does such an under-meaning cause annoyance to individuals. God is not divided and portioned out among the different modes of divination, but without undergoing division he produces them all. Nor does he bring different things to perfection separately in regard to time and in diverse ways, but operates them all together and at once, according to a single design. Nor is he held fast in regard to signs, being encompassed by them or distinguished, but he holds them together in himself, includes them in one and produces them according to a high purpose from himself.

If, however, it extends in prognostication to things without soul, such as little pebbles, rods,\* certain trees, stones, wheat or barley-meal, this is itself most wonderful as a mark of divine vaticination, because it imparts a soul to things without a soul, activity to things inactive, and makes everything clear and known, to partake of understandingly and to be distinguished by the measures of the higher intelligence, though often themselves having no share of understanding.

God, it seems to me, clearly indicates another mighty marvel in these things. As he sometimes makes a simple man utter a pointed saying with wisdom of speech, through which it becomes manifest to everybody that the operation is not a human, but a divine occurrence, through things deprived of knowledge, he reveals thoughts which transcend all knowledge. At the same time he declares to mankind that the signs exhibited are worthy of belief, and that they are superior to the region of nature, God being exalted above it. Thus he makes things known which in the sphere of nature are unknown, and the things knowing which are unknowing. By means of them he inculcates in us sagacity, and through everything which is in the world he sets the intellect in motion toward the truth of the things which are, the things which come into existence and the things which shall be.

I think, therefore, that it is evident from these things that the technic of oracular utterance is absolutely contrary to what you observe and suspect. It is authoritative and primary, independent and above all, comprising all things, but not itself enclosed by any, nor shut away by those who possess it. On the other hand, it mounts above and exercises dominion over everything universally and without limitation; ruling all things with unlimited power and giving forth portents generally. You will, therefore, easily by these things resolve these ignoble doubts which annoy many, and exalt yourself as you ought to the spiritual, divine and undeceiving foretokens the gods from everything. We contend, therefore, that the divine nature is not brought down into the signs and symbols of the technic of divination.

*(To be Continued.)*

"Men have said to me a thousand times in various nations and dialects: 'We know not God!' My answer has never varied: Man knows 'not' God, because he insists upon defining Him. God is too great to be otherwise than mysterious to human nature. 'Proofs' of Theism make men atheists; whilst subjection to the spirit of Irreligion is first depraving, and at last fatal."—WILLIAM HITCHMAN.

## TAYLORIANA.

### I.

"I remember to have heard Southey, the poet, say that he knew two Taylors—Thomas, the Platonist, and William (of Norwich) the celebrated German scholar and writer, and thought that these two, more than most others of his acquaintance, were distinguished alike for their earnestness in letters and in the purity of their lives." (From *Letter of the late R. SHELTON MACKENZIE, LL. D., dated September 9th, 1881, to the editor of THE PLATONIST.*)

### II.

Emerson, when in England, made diligent enquiry about Thomas Taylor, but declared that he could only ascertain one fact concerning him, viz: that he had a son and named him PROKLOS.

### III.

"The book which Thomas Taylor wanted to borrow from Dr. Burney, was *Simplikios on the Categories*. Dyce mentioned to him a passage in Dionysios Periegetes, when he repeated from memory a considerable number of lines."—(BARKER'S *Literary Anecdotes*.)

"Dyce has heard Thomas Taylor speak of his interview with Burney when he wanted to borrow one of the *Commentators on Aristotle*; after much talk and parley about how long he wanted it, and if he would return it in three days, Taylor said that he could not read it through in less than a month, and, as Dr. B. was unwilling to lend it, he was withdrawing, when B. called him back, saying that he did not wish to act uncivilly by a scholar, and that he would lend it to him, taking an acknowledgment. Taylor proposed to express in it that it should be returned by such a time, but Burney insisted on its being returnable on demand. Ask Dyce for the particulars. It was at the Pinelli sale where Porson had the talk with Taylor about Plutarch and Maximus Tyrius."—(BARKER'S *Literary Anecdotes*.)

### IV.

"With that remarkable person, Thomas Taylor, I was well acquainted. In Greek verbal scholarship he was no doubt very deficient (he was entirely self-taught); but in a knowledge of the matter of Platô, of Aristotle, of the Commentators on Aristotle, (themselves a library), of Proclus, of Plotinos, etc., he has never, I presume, been equalled by any Englishman.—(Note by REV. ALEXANDER DYCE to *Porsoniana*) London, 1856.

In the same note Mr. Dyce, on the authority of Taylor, gives some particulars of Floyer Sydenham, and says that Taylor "had a scrupulous regard to truth in whatever he stated." "On their first meeting Sydenham shook Taylor cordially by the hand, and said he reckoned himself truly fortunate in having at last met with a real Platonist—deeply regretting his own want of familiarity with Proklos and Plotinos."

### V.

MANOR PLACE, WALWORTH, August 3, 1814.

Dear Sir:

Mr. Meredith desired me to request your acceptance of the accompanying copy of my translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* as a testimony of his esteem for your worthy manners and great erudition. At your leisure do me the favor to inform me what you think of my Greek motto, as I shall rejoice if it meets with your approbation. Mr. Meredith hopes that the next time you are in town, he shall have the pleasure of your company to dine with him.

I remain, dear sir, your much obliged and obedient servant,

THOMAS TAYLOR:

[To E. H. BARKER.]

## VI.

"He (Taylor) is a most enthusiastic admirer of the Platonic School, and has for several years past occasionally astonished the Public with some strange production or other. \* \* \* Mr. Taylor has a very respectable share of learning, and is no less indefatigable than he is whimsical."—*Literary Memoirs* (London, 1798).

## VII.

"And by way of example and specimen of such [apocatastatic] periods, and of the proper method of detecting them, I will make a quotation from a most learned and very extraordinary man, one peculiarly well qualified to have an opinion in such abstruse matters, a sort of Christian heathen in the midst of Christendom in the nineteenth century, a man who honestly and manfully went over from Jehovah to Jupiter, a Julian on a small scale. I desire, however, to take this occasion to acknowledge my obligations to the gentleman in question—not for his heathenism but for his learning—for I shall often in the course of this work find it much more convenient to use his translations than to make them for myself. Where I cannot avail myself of his aid, I must not be expected to translate with his admirable closeness to the original," etc.—*The Apocatastasis; or, Progress Backwards*. (Burlington, 1854).

## VIII.

"What I heard Taylor observe with respect to Socrates may be said of Jesus—that though he transmitted no writings of his own to posterity, we have his mind and his sayings and his greatness handed to us by others."—*From Letter of KEATS*.

## IX.

In an interesting notice of Milnes' *Life of Keats* in the *North British Review* for November, 1848, the reviewer after quoting Keats' *Ode to Apollo*, says: "We have chosen the above collocation of images for our first illustration, chiefly because it pairs well, as far as subject and mere command of language go, with another poem, which we give from an unpublished manuscript of Thomas Taylor, the translator of Plato, and which, besides being a fine example of passionate impetus and admirable harmony of thought, is very characteristic of the feelings and opinions of its eccentric author. [Here follows the hymn, *To the Rising Sun*.] In its phraseology and its separate images, this fine poem is about on a level with the foregoing "Ode:" but there is a charm in Taylor's effusion which is wholly wanting in the verses of Keats. Taylor believed what he was writing; he was, as most of our readers are aware, a Light-worshipper, and was in this poem pouring forth real idolatry to the Sun. His feeling taught him secrets of the poet's art, which were not revealed to the lazy labor of Keats, in his lines about Apollo. The frequently-repeated and splendidly-effective 'See!' was the true and inimitable suggestion of sincere emotion, as is proved by the otherwise inartificial character of the poem; the alliteration with which the poem abounds is evidently the unconscious effect of passion; the music is occasionally exquisite; there are no more beautiful eight syllables in this respect in English poetry than those which constitute the second line of the eighth stanza; and these are all of them excellencies which have rarely been arrived at by a poet of the sensual school, however highly cultivated may have been his peculiar faculties."

It is an interesting fact that the Reviewer possessed the original manuscript of Taylor's beautiful and truth-expressive hymn, *To the Rising Sun*: and curious that he was not aware that it had already been twice published, viz.: in the *Monthly*

*Magazine* for June, 1797, and Taylor's *Collectanea* (London, 1806, privately printed). Recently it was published in the fifth volume of THE PLATONIST (page 109). [For a copy of the *North British Review*; referred to above, and also the following interesting item, we are indebted to the kindness and generosity of Mr. Bertram Dobell, publisher and bookseller, Queen's Crescent, Haverstock Hill, London, Eng.]

## X.

"He that is all body and no soul is deficient in understanding, and how small such a man looks when defeated in argument by a person one-fourth his size. It was a saying of my grandfather's, Thomas Taylor, the translator of Plato:

"Where mind prevails  
The body fails;  
But where the mind  
You cannot find,  
The body there  
Is plump and fair."

(From *The World's Great Sin; or Human Nature Reviewed*, by CHARLES WILLIAM JONES, London, 1861).

## XI.

"On my asking him one evening if Platō was what he would call a metaphysical writer, he answered quite readily: 'If I were to say that a great many parts of Platō were not metaphysical, and deeply metaphysical, I should be misleading you. Right or wrong, those Greeks have a prodigious power of reasoning. No modern writers exhibit such deep power of argumentation. Platō sometimes reasons wrongly, but does so knowingly, and sometimes out of pleasantry, as in his *Euthyphron*, which, though it may be considered as a piece of sophistical pleasantry, yet exhibits wonderful powers of logical dexterity.'" (From *Letter of John Symmons, Esq., to E. H. Barker*).

"I showed this passage from the letter of my learned friend, Mr. Symmons, to my philosophical friend, Thomas Taylor, Esq.; and he, who has spent a long life in the exclusive study of ancient philosophy, is privileged to pass judgment on Dr. Parr, who bestowed only occasional attention on the subject, whose reputation, in the radiancy of intellectual excellence, needs no meretricious glare of unjust praise, and who, amid the stores of vast erudition, could afford to be ignorant of some things. I subjoin Mr. Taylor's satisfactory reply to my communication:

MANOR PLACE, WALWORTH, Dec. 14, 1827.

Dear Sir:

Dr. Parr was no less right in asserting that he had found in Aristotle the germ of almost all modern discoveries, than he was wrong when he says "that Platō sometimes reasons wrongly, but does so knowingly, and sometimes out of pleasantry, as in his *Euthyphron*, which, though it may be considered a piece of sophistical pleasantry, yet exhibits wonderful powers of logical dexterity." The Doctor, in this latter assertion, has committed a more egregious blunder than Dr. Dibdin, who ranks Platō, the prince of philosophers, among the *philologists*; and he also discovers a profound ignorance of the Dialectic of Platō, which is very different from vulgar dialectic, as the latter is solely conversant with opinion, and is accurately investigated in the *Topics* of Aristoteles. For the business of this summit of the sciences is to employ divisions, analysations and demonstrations as primary sciences in the investigation of causes; imitating the progression of beings from the first principle of things, and their continual progression to it, as the ultimate object of desire. "But there are three energies," says Proklos in *Parmenides* L. I., "of this most scientific method: the first of which is adapted to youth, and is useful for the purpose of rousing their intellect, which is as it were in a dormant state; for it is a true exercise of the eye of the soul in the speculation of things, leading forth through opposite positions the essential impression of forms, which it contains, and considering not only the divine path, as it were, which conducts to truth, but exploring whether the deviations from it contain anything worthy of belief; and lastly, stimulating the all-various conceptions of the soul. But the second

energy takes place when intellect rests from its former investigations, is becoming most familiar with the speculation of beings, and beholds truth itself firmly established on a pure, holy foundation. And this energy, according to Sôkratès, by a progression through ideas evolves the whole of an intelligible nature till it arrives at this, which is first; and this, by analysing, defining, demonstrating and dividing, proceeding upward and downward, till having entirely investigated the essence of intelligibles, it raises itself to a nature superior to beings. But the soul being perfectly established in this nature as her paternal port, no longer tends to a more excellent object of desire, as she has now arrived at the end of her search: and you may say that what is delivered in the *Phaidros* and *Sophistes* is the employment of this energy, giving a two-fold division to some, and a four-fold to other operations of the dialectic art; and on this account it is assigned to such as philosophise purely, and no longer require preparatory exercise, but nourish the intellect of their soul in pure intellection. But the third energy purifies from two-fold ignorance\* when its reasonings are employed upon men full of opinion; and this is spoken of in the *Sophistes*. Hence it appears that the dialectic energy of Platôn is triple, either subsisting through opposite arguments, or alone unfolding truth, or alone confuting falsehood. According to the first of these energies, Sôkratès in Platôn exercises young men, surveying the arguments on both sides of the question, and examining whether that which appears to be true to each is really so or not, as in the *Theaitetos*, whether science is sense or not; and in the *Lysis*, investigating what a friend is, at one time he confutes the opinion of Empedoklès, that any kind of similitude is sufficient to produce friendship, and at another the opinion of Hésiodos and Hérakleitos, that dissimilars are friendly to each other—purifying through this confutation his young auditors from false opinions. The *Gorgias* also, the *Protagoras*, and other dialogues of Platôn, are full of this Sokratic dialectic. Of this kind, likewise, are the contests in the first Book of the *Republic* with the savage Thrasymakhos, who, however, was at length tamed by the mighty Sokrates. The *Euthyphron* belongs to the third division of Platôn's dialectic, and is therefore *Διδλογος Ελεγχτικος*: for its design is to *confute* the false opinions of Euthyphron concerning sanctity. For this sophist conceived that what is asserted by all those that were wise in divine concerns, among the Greeks, respecting the sections (*Touat*) of the intellectual Gods, is to be understood literally. This ignorance, however, of the recondite meaning of the theological fables of the Greeks, which formerly existed among some of the Grecian sophists, is at present universally prevalent. Hence the moderns have not even a dreaming conception of the sublime truths which these fables occultly indicate, but are so infatuated as to understand them according to their apparent signification, not knowing that every fable has an inward, different from its outward, meaning; for, if this is not admitted, it is no longer a fable. Platôn, in consequence of well knowing this distinction, banished Hômeros from his *Republic*, which was calculated to produce the most excellent and the most philosophic characters; assigning as a reason for so doing, "that the youthful part of the community would not be able to distinguish what is allegorical from what is not." He dismisses Hômeros, however, as a divine person; pouring oil on his head, and crowning him with wool, both of which it was lawful to perform to statues in the most holy sacrifices, as we are informed by the Greek Scholiast on this part of the third Book of the *Republic*. [A Greek paragraph is here omitted.] When Dr. Parr also in his *Catalogue* ranks Gray, the poet, among those who best understood the writings of Platôn, he betrays the most extreme ignorance of the doctrines of that divine philosopher, as must be immediately obvious to every tyro in Platônism, who reads the remarks of Gray, as published by Matthias, on the works of Platôn. So that Dr. Parr, in both these instances, has shown himself to be much below *par*! This great ignorance of Gray I may, perhaps, hereafter expose to the public.

I remain, with great esteem, yours very sincerely,

THOMAS TAYLOR.

"I had observed to Mr. Taylor that Dr. Parr had once remarked to me that in Aristotelês he had found the germ of almost all modern discoveries; and to this Mr. T. alludes at the commencement of his *Letter*." (From *Parriana*, by E. H. BARKER, London, 1828).

\* *Twofold* ignorance according to Platôn is when a man is ignorant that he is ignorant, but *simple* ignorance is when a man who is ignorant is conscious that he is ignorant.

## XII.

### REMINISCENCE OF TAYLOR.

[From *Memoirs of Dr. Robert Blakey*, London, 1879.]

"About this time I was introduced through Mr. Charles Attwood, to Mr. Thomas Taylor, of Norwich [London], commonly called "Plato Taylor." He was an old man when this took place, and had devoted himself for forty years to the exclusive study of what he called the "First Philosophy." He was very free and easy in his manner and conversation. He was, he said, the only man since the days of the Emperor Justinian,\* who had penetrated the intricacies and effected a complete mastership of the ancient system of Grecian thought. He strenuously maintained that Aristotle was not only the pupil but, in the strictest sense, the holder of the Platonic dogmas; contrary to the ignorant and rash deductions of the moderns, who had never fully comprehended either master or pupil. Mr. Taylor affirmed that all that the moderns possess of moral science, considered abstractly, consists of nothing else than small and broken fragments of the great Platonic union of the universe. He spoke, therefore, in a very scornful tone, on "the dark and partial systems of modern writers" on human nature.

"Soon after my first interview with Mr. Taylor, Mr. Attwood sent me a letter he had just received from him, in which were the following words: "Send this on Plato to Mr. Blakey." It is highly characteristic of the philosopher's style and modes of thought:

### PLATO.

"Among the millions of moderns none, no verily, not one, has soared to an approach to genuine greatness, intellectual and moral, except in proportion as the lights of truth from the Platonic orb—a lamp eternal, burning in a sepulchre, yet even to the dead not useless—have broken on their mental senses. For the most part this has been at a second, or even a third-hand transmission; aye, often but a tenth reflection. Milton, Young, Thomson, Akenside, as well as even Shakspere and Pope amongst our poets, are conspicuous instances. The first four writers were unusually proficient in Platonic knowledge, for dark ages like the present; had drank its spirit at its source, the genuine living fountain. Shakspere's all-searching genius derived its intelligence and elevation from such scattered glimpses as shone, to his acute perceptions, in the frequent translations from the crowd of old philosophers of the less learned sects, whose doctrines were both mutilated and corrupted, as is usual in sectarian versions of Platonic truth. The comparatively learned genius of the Catholic Church has often delighted in its doctrines, and many of its scholars have bathed their intellects in the secret aspirations of ancient wisdom. Thence came the greatness of that earlier age, continued through the one that followed it. The light of mankind, then, had much resemblance to those roseate hues that linger on the mountain-tops long after sunset; and men of upward tendencies of soul, like Shakspere, are the cliffs which catch them. Pope knew little of Platönism by study by himself, but solely from the discourses of St. John, who himself studied it in the Latin version of the monk Ficinus, with all the felicity but levity of his natural temperament.

"How little Warburton really knew of the Grecian sage may be guessed at from this: that though the Editor of Pope he knew not his (to modern minds) most brilliant work, the *Essay on Man*, was but depraved and corrupted Platönism.

"Cudworth drew all his stores of wisdom from his considerable, though imperfect, acquaintance with this lore. I think him by far the ablest English writer on Platonic themes, but then he drank of the stream of health at its purest fountains; and though neither he nor any other modern, save one, has ever been able to master the arduous difficulties of that stupendous lore, yet it was to him, and it is to all, as the tree in the Garden of Paradise, capable of communicating immortality by its very taste.

"Bishop Berkeley, the best English, and perhaps the best modern writer, derived all his greatness, all his clearness, all his purity of mind, from an unusual effusion of this sacred Grecian learning. His fine genius was naturally congenial to all divine conceptions. But in spite of these instances just named, Platönism has been for a long course of deeply-benighted ages, to even the wisest of our unhappy and bewildered species, 'a fountain closed and a book sealed.'"

\*Mr. Blakey has "Julian :" an obvious error.

## SOKRATES AND ARISTOKLES.\*

(From a Sunday Lecture, by William Hitchman, M. D., M. R. C. S. L. S. A., etc., Liverpool, England.)

During the last decade or so it has been alike my pleasure and privilege to have delivered, without cost to others, more than five hundred lectures, on Sunday alone, in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, or elsewhere. They have mostly embraced the philosophy of the pure sciences, as a sounder basis for a new social, moral and religious faith, with particular reference to Grecian philosophers, poets, rhetoricians and *artists*. In short, I have endeavored to uphold justly the warmest aspiration of my whole being, in Catholicity *v.* Catholicon, selecting from the principles, methods, or systems of ancient and modern sages, combining the teaching of Aristoklēs with the doctrines of Hebrew and Christian records, as once did a sect in the Christian Church, and the Faculty of Physic, eclectically. For about such period as ten years, moreover, was Aristoklēs a disciple of Sôkratēs, the philosopher of Athens, *facile princeps*, and, indeed, of the world; the man of men who not only justified the celebrated oracle, or Delphic response, as to the true and only *Gnosis*, but he took a step higher in the Temple of Truth, by which he reached the point of knowing what knowledge *is*. For this grand and glorious achievement he was accused before the Council of Five Hundred as the corrupter of Athenian youth, of introducing innovations in religion, and of ridiculing the gods! Upon these charges he was condemned to death by poison, and for are knowledge of the life and sayings of Sôkratēs we are indebted to his most eminent disciples, Xenophôn and Aristoklēs, the last nick-named "Platô," by Ariston, an Argive wrestler, because of the broadness of his shoulders, *platus*, hence, PLATÔN, the sublime and spiritual, the pure, the noble, the *divine teacher*.

Plato's master, I protest, accelerated his own despotic murder by the very firmness of his strong intellect, the courage of his brave heart, and the practical righteousness of his daily life. His uncompromising integrity yielded not even to false witnesses or ignorant, bigoted, tyrannic judges. He bore injuries patiently; in fact, the most gratuitous that ever wilful envy conceived, or wanton malice wrought. And this, too, with the noblest, grandest dignity, expressing deep concern for those especially, who boasted that they were acquainted with everything, whilst they really knew nothing. He *acted* Christianity and *taught* it hundreds of years before Christ, in that his whole life was spent in devotion to the culture and happiness of others, and always did his soul shine resplendent in the fulness of heartfelt compassion for human depravity. His character, I say, was irreproachable, his doctrines pure and void of pedantry, having no obscurity of parable, or mistiness of myth. No religious fabulist was he, or mere thaumaturgist, working wonders for the credulous, and miracles for the mythologic, yet he had direct intercourse with diviner spirits than those of earth, and thus acquired a knowledge of heavenly things unattainable then as now by the natural intellect or sensuous mortal.

Here, for example, are a few philosophical or religio-scientific questions propounded in Athens hundreds of years before Christ, or the era in which Jesus of Nazareth lived ideally or corporeally. "What *is* good? What *is* beautiful? What *is* just or unjust for all men? What *are* temperance and chastity in everything? What *is* courage? What *is* cowardice? What *is* a true citizen or real patriot? What *is* piety that will please all good men? What *are* the elements out of

\* My experimental researches on Archebiosis, or spontaneous generation, will accord with the teaching of Plato, viz.: "the living are born from the dead," etc.,—W. H.

which things sensible and visible are made to appear? What was and is the initial cause or *unseen* principle or energy, which evolves changes in Nature, or phases of humanity, apparent to human senses (phenomena)? What *is* change? Is each phasis due alone to motion? Is generation of minerals, plants, animals, men, and angels or demons, something new, respectively and integrally? Or is mind, soul, matter, *ipso facto*, only a decomposition and recombination of elements always existing, *but differently combined?*" Meanwhile, the glory was departing from Athens, as the ploughshare afterward passed over the ruins of Jerusalem; yet the setting of the sun is preparatory to its rising again.

## OMNIA E SPIRITU.

With change of name only, one might quote from Pope's *Epistles of Horace*:

"Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night;  
God said, 'Let Platón be!' and all was light."

On his mother's side, the illustrious philosopher, the broad-souled as well as broad-shouldered Aristoklēs was descended from Solôn.

## HERITAGE SHOWS THE MAN AS MORNING SHOWS THE DAY.

Though sold for a slave by the tyrant of Syracuse, his purchase, as if prompted by a ministering angel, gave him his freedom, and Platô commenced teaching in the garden of the Akademy a philosophy of God and Man that has never been surpassed, as in elevated, rational, and religious conception of the laws and forces of the universe. Platonism teaches that God is a mighty spirit, wise and just in His own infinite and eternal being, and that He formed the visible universe out of pre-existent, amorphous, intractable material, according to patterns, or ideas, abiding in His *own* mind. Hence, true philosophy is a knowledge of the very nature of things, discoverable only by a contemplation of those innate ideas of *man*, which resemble the eternal ideas of God. We must reason about them, and *compare them with their copies* in this, our seen universe. Philosophy, in brief, is the knowledge of what is indestructible and therefore everlasting, existing necessarily as contradistinguished from the dependent and temporary. True knowledge is not concerned with changeable, imaginative, fantastic notions, or mere scientific opinions. It is not even obtainable at all through the senses, or *exoterically*; it is not the result of human experience or outward observation, nor is it the outcome of cerebration or understanding alone, but it *is* the product of human reason, as partaking of the Divine Reason, after which all things were fashioned in worlds material and spiritual.

"If our proposals once again were heard—  
We should compel them to a quick result."

PLOTINUS *redivivus*! A Pantheistic School of Eclectic Philosophy, with stores of Persian and Indian lore. In other words, a Neo-Reconciliation of the Platonic and Aristotelian systems with Oriental Theosophy, mysticism or theurgy notwithstanding.

"Theurgic hymns, songs of incantation!"

Why *not*? Provided always, certain acts of wisdom, or virtuous habits, or good words and beauteous symbols, move god-like beings to impart to *us* SECRETS OF SOUL AND SPIRIT, which must forever surpass resources of *ex parte* Science, and lay open to *us* a knowledge of the future, as to Egyptian Platonists of old, and RENDER OUR REAL SELVES VISIBLE. Surely, this were a consummation of vaster importance to *us* than pentagons and geometrical solids, Plutonic bodies, or the precession of the equinoxes. If the mind and its excellences were regarded by all mankind rather than the carnal desires of the body pure spiritual affection would *largely* subsist be-

tween the sexes, and poverty, ignorance, crime and disease, together with war, overcrowding and famine would curse the earth no more.

"Gone, glimmering through the dream of things that were."

It may not, I fear, be my happy lot to address you again from this platform, over which has floated for a long series of years, as on a banner of light, the chosen motto of my youth :

"LIVE PURELY, EXERCISE JUSTICE, LOVE TRUTH,"

seeing how broken is my bodily health, perhaps a warning sent in mercy. If so, let my last words be to commend to your notice and support a new and beautiful exponent of the philosophy of Sôkratès and Aristokles, called THE PLATONIST—published in this country by Mr. I. C. Foulger, 13 Paternoster Row, London, E. C., edited by an American sage, Mr. Thomas M. Johnson, of Osceola, St. Clair county, Missouri, and supported in heart and in intellect by Professor Wilder, of New York, a physician and a philosopher—*haud ulli secundus*—whose mission it is to elevate man from the sensible to the intellectual, from a wearisome condition of flesh on earth, to higher states of being, and the treasures of heaven. I notice a brilliant article, termed "Dialectic," by Mr. Angus Dallas, of Toronto, in the last issue of THE PLATONIST, of which I have only time and strength to say:—

"High erected thoughts sealed in the heart of courtesy—"

and may every blessing be theirs, and yours, in time and eternity !

THOUGHTS CONCERNING "NATURAL LAW IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD."

BY MRS. LIZZIE JONES.

[Read before "The American Akadémé," March 10th, 1884.]

*Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, is the attractive title of a recent work, written by Prof. Henry Drummond, F. R. S. E., F. G. S. of London, wherewith we may assume greater breadth of horizon in the thought-range, in that direction—an enlargement of the visual angles, and a hopeful basis for the continuity of the race, through spiritual as well as natural realms.

Generally, in our thought of the pilgrimage of the race through the spheres, it has been mostly confined to the period in which it wears a fleshly instrument; and as to its tenure in the spiritual world, that is the minister's business, to be attended to on Sundays. When he sounds the note of alarm, that there is danger ahead, we quake in our shoes a moment, and then cover our retreat from the subject, with unbelieving vagueness, perhaps, with a pretense of taking off our shores at the portal, or with the specious plea of reverence for such profound subjects, and go on in the old way, not caring much to be bothered with thinking out clearly how man is related to this or any sphere. So when he has worn out his "fleshly instrument" we are at a loss to know or think what becomes of the person, or whether he will be deprived altogether of the conveniences of living.

This book of Prof. Drummond's affords ground of encouragement, reinforcement and assurance that it is well with the race (in certain respects and limitations, which you will readily call to mind), in the uttermost corner of the Lord's universe; that natural and spiritual laws are one; and that in either realm they are equally and as effectually operative.

In these times, when Materialism seems to be on gaining ground, when skepticism concerning anything supernatural is defiant in tone, when the agnostic elements of the social

structure rave incessantly about our inability to know any thing of the invisible, when the intelligence of the age is in creasingly drifting away from the sacred oracles and their expositions, because untrained in reasonable thinking upon the grounds of faith, and when a large class really do not know whether life is worth living, it is refreshing to consider the reasons why it is probable, that law in the visible world, is the invisible in the visible; that the supernatural is natural, or that the working of law is the effigy of the omnipotent processes of spirit; that natural law does extend through the spiritual world, and that it is a subject which concerns us to know something of, as a prospective inheritance.

In considering this extension of law, it is not the projection of the natural upward, but must always be understood that it is a projection downward of the spiritual. To magnify the laws of nature, as of this small world of ours, is to take a provincial view of the universe. Law is great, not because the phenomenal world is great, but because these vanishing lines are the avenues into the eternal orders.

It is foreseen in the outstart that in all efforts to address a body of thinkers, the obligation is to have a tussle with, and to upheave Matter, and apply to it the processes of spirit, whose agent or servant it is, before any headway can be made; and the sooner this is done, the sooner business will be arrived at.

Assuming the fundamental proposition of the philosopher, that the universe is composed of mind and matter, and that it is a prevailing opinion that the reconciliation of these elements is the problem of the century (and has been of other centuries as well), a line of procedure is adopted as follows: While sunning my constitution under the shadow of Concord Philosophy during several successive sessions, a recipé for accumulating and conditioning certain world-factors and setting them a-going was purloined from the sages, and in the use of this it is hoped the present incumbent will not be held severely responsible for philosophic or even accurate statement in this premise, from which it is intended to hitch on the reasoning of my author.

The content of the expanses is souls. The sphere of time and space is the panorama of the universal soul-motions of the realms of beings, and outside these realms there is no time and space; time being defined as duration and continuity of process, or the moving image of eternity, and space being quantity of time, and their realisation being change, experience.

Matter is an aspect or an apparition to sense, of motion; and motion is an apparition of force, and so there is no objective, substantial essence of matter. It could neither begin or continue action or motion of itself. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which appear."—(*Epistle to Hebrews*, xi. 3.) The soul is postulated as an essential form, self-conscious and self-determining; these terms generalising respectively all thought and all action. Pythagoras defines the soul to be a self-moving number, which expresses the same idea, or at least corroborates it.

The material corporeality is no constituent of man. It has no predicate of life. It is moulded into the form of the man who dwells with it and is as helpless as any other earthly object when the occupant leaves it. The energies of being are prior and posterior. The progression of being into its end and its retrograde back to its source are its movements. These two movements are correlates. The progressions of the spirit are the flowing images of the world of spirit—the expanse of the eternally abiding. The other, the retrogressive movement, is nature—the temporal and the evanescent.

We are accustomed to think of eternity (using the term as synonymous with spirit-world) as some great place where souls are housed, and of the natural sphere the same, while it is emphatically true that neither is outside the processes of life. Spiritual life is not something outside of ourselves. The idea is not that the Highest is in heaven, and that we can stretch out some mysterious faculty and deal with Him there. Vegetable life is not contained in a reservoir in the skies, and measured out spasmodically at certain seasons! The life is *in* every plant and tree, and so the precious kingdom is *in* us (or ought to be). Life is permanently fixed and rooted in the organism. It is not one of the homeless forces which promiscuously inhabit space, or which can be gathered like electricity from the clouds, and dissipated back into space. Life is definite and resident; and spiritual life is not a visit from a force, but a resident tenant in the soul. The soul is not a subsident mass. That which is ever-acting is eternal, same in either sphere.

Bodies are progenies. They are produced. A body is a frame in which a person is set up in mortal business, if on earth, or in spiritual business if in a corresponding location. To body forth is to make an exhibit of surface-belongings, outside appearances—a sort of spread-out of proportions of vehicular *stuff*—by means of which we are seen by each other here; and without such sensuous covering the spiritual is inappreciable and our concert of action, on the material world, or with people in mortal connection, would be impossible. It is to be expected that we shall always have a position from which we can act with our kind in any world, and that the necessary implements of equipage thereto pertaining will be at hand for such action.

Matter, as has been said, is indifferent to form. Regular forms are all the effects of spirit. They are adumbrated from something. This scarf-skin body that we wear now is not ourselves. It is no essential part of the human body. It is our time-instrument—our “machine,” as Bishop Foster calls it. He says: “The universe is a dual, comprising two discrete and discriminate realms, one material, the other spiritual; one visible and palpable, the other incognisable by sense. Man is sometimes said to be the isthmus between the two. One side of him belongs to the supersensible realm; the other side of him belongs to the sensible. Looking out of one window you look up to God and the great spiritual family, and looking out of the other window you look down to the dust.”

Man is a spirit enshrined in a body and is the only animal, among the animated forms, that presents a distinctively spiritual form technically speaking, and it is presumable that *his* is the essential mind-form and that it can never have any other form than it *now is*. Taking man as a spiritual being, a spirit is a wholeness, an organised person, of which the earthly house is a *fac simile*, the spirit having given it form in the first place; and we are not to suppose that there is an unmaking, a dissolving process, as if the spiritual were disintegrated at any period in its history. Structural disorganisation never precedes birth in any department of nature. When the grain or the bird, or the animal is developed, it comes forth organised in perfect shape.

Death, certainly, can have no power of reconstruction of the spirit-body, when its only office is to set the spirit free. It is sometimes said, when a man dies, “his spirit has fled,” as though some formless essence had escaped and left him behind. Whereas instead of implying that man *has a spirit*, the truth is man is a spiritual being, and *has* a material body, and when he dies the man departs and leaves his material body behind him.

The transition of the soul from one sphere to another is not a question of distance, but of different vision and realisation.

“Lo here, or lo there” is not predicate of spirit, namely: of our own selves, which are spirit, because for a spirit to travel “is to think, and be any whither.”

It has already been said, that the universal expanses have no other content than souls, since the soul makes the expanses. So we have the two worlds, the Natural and the Spiritual. The prior, outgoing, energy relates to the intelligible, and the posterior, returning, energy relates to the natural world. The natural world is the drama of the spiritual world, and depends from it. Said the mystic poet, William Blake: “I do not see the outward creation; it is a hindrance to me.” Blake being a seer, or having open vision, he beheld the working of the inward creation. Mrs. Browning said:

“Not a natural flower can grow on earth,  
Without a flower on the spiritual side,  
Substantial, archetypal—all aglow,  
With blossoming causes.” \* \* \*  
If a man could feel \* \* \*  
The spiritual significance burn through,  
The hieroglyphic of material shows  
Henceforward, he would paint the globe with wings.”

Now let the poet (still Mrs. Browning) hold these two spheres of Natural and Spiritual together while for a few moments the situation is under examination. She says:

“And, verily, many thinkers of this age,  
Aye, many Christian teachers, half in Heaven,  
Are wrong in just my sense, who understood,  
Our Natural world too insularly, as if  
No spiritual counterpart completed it—  
Consummating its meaning, rounding all  
To justice and perfection, *line by line*,  
*Form by form, nothing single or alone*,  
The great below, clenched by the great above.”

Prof. Drummond says: “that he is well aware that the class of books which proposed to deal with science and religion, were received by a large class with derision; that science was tired of reconciliations between two things which never should have been contrasted; that Religion is offended by the patronage of an ally which it professes not to need; and that the critics rightly discovered, that in most cases, where science is pitted against Religion, or fused with it, there was some fatal misconception, as to the scope or province of either. But the thoughtful mind will perceive that the fact of its subject-matter being law—a property peculiar to neither Science nor Religion, at once places this book on a different footing.” The real problem which the author proposes to deal with may be stated in a sentence or two. “Can we identify the natural laws, or any one of them in the spiritual sphere? That vague lines everywhere run through the spiritual world is already beginning to be recognised. Is it possible to link them with these great lines running through the visible universe, which we call the Natural Laws, or are they fundamentally distinct?” Saying at the same time that the only legitimate questions one dare put to Nature are those which concern universal human good and the Divine interpretation of things. We have truth in Nature, as it came from God, said the author, and it has to be read with the same unbiased mind, the same open eye, the same faith, and the same reverence as all other revelation.

Prof. Drummond relates that he found it to be his duty, at a given time, to lecture to a class of students on week-days on Science, and on Sundays to lecture on subjects of a moral and religious character. The two fountains of knowledge began to overflow in his mind, and finally their waters met and mingled; the crystals of former doctrines dissolved, and the fermenting waters were not washed away by the flood of science. In other words the subject-matter, Religion, had taken on the method of expression of science “and I discovered myself

aid the Professor) enunciating spiritual law in the exact terms of Biology. I found the truth running out to my audience on Sunday by the week-day outlets. And, when I came to consider, seriously, what this involved, I saw, or seemed to see, that it meant, essentially, the introduction of Natural Law *into the spiritual world*." Although it would be almost as rash to differ with St. Paul as with this learned Professor, I would say, recognition of the laws which already exist in both spheres, but I will adhere in what is to be said to his form of expression. That is, Laws as an ascertained working sequence, a constant order, among the phenomena of Nature : laws, known by their operation, and not as actual lines drawn across the domain of the Natural and Spiritual, any more than lines of latitude and longitude on the earth's surface are actual. Processes are referred to, not powers ; merely nodes, not themselves operators.

" The position we have been led to take up (said the author), is not that the Spiritual Laws are analogous to the Natural Laws, but that they are the same laws." It is not a question of analogy but of *identity*. Analogous phenomena are not the fruit of parallel laws but of the same laws—laws which at one end, as it were, may be dealing with matter, and at the other end with spirit ; and thus Prof. Drummond proceeds to establish his position by *a priori* reasoning, the laws of continuity and harmony being prominent therein—marshalling by the aid of scientific demonstration, certain requisite discrete materials of the universe into thinkable form, and tracing the growth of the idea of Law, in the discerning of the great lines of order, where nature had yielded her choicest secrets to her explorers. Summing the extension of these laws throughout every department of knowledge, except the religious, which is denominated by him as the great exception—our author questions why this reign of Law cannot be recognised as universal, thus adding to Theology an important increment of growth and constituency ?

Not that the intimated exclusion is at all the fault of Theology, since it was obliged to wait for scientific progress.

It is now clear that Dante's mountain of Purgatory does not stand in western mid-ocean since Columbus has once sailed thither—and indeed in the department of Theology, there is no reason why Science might not outstrip her own theories, as in the case of the first voyage across the Atlantic by the steamship Great Western. She was laden with Dr. Lardner's scientific lectures proving the impossibility of ocean steam-navigation ! But to return to our point from this digression. Reasoning from analogy how do we know how far these lines reach ? Is it not probable that they are universally operative ? And, if the analogies of natural law can be extended to the spiritual world, the whole region at once falls within the domain of Science, and seems a basis of, as well as an illumination in, the constitution and course of Nature. The great poet Goëthë speaks of the natural sciences as " so human, so true, they teach us that the greatest, the most mysterious phenomena take place openly, orderly, and simply unmagically, they must finally quench the thirst of poor ignorant man for the dark extraordinary, by showing him that the extraordinary lies so near, so clear, so familiar, and so determinately true."

And would it not be delightful to be able to make a corresponding statement, legitimately concluded in regard to the spiritual sciences—to foreshadow, which must be the aim of the book under consideration—to lessen the distance between the sensuous and the supersensuous, the seen and the unseen ?

Again it is posited by the author that science has taken theology at its own estimate, as a thing apart. The spiritual world is not only a different world, but a different kind of a world—a world arranged on entirely different principles, under

a different governmental form. Well, suppose that the reign of law is at work in every department of nature, transforming knowledge into science, and the process goes on, showing nature to be one great unity until the borders of the spiritual world are reached ; then the law of continuity ceases, and the harmony breaks down. Now, we have already seen that these two spheres of natural and spiritual complement each other, that they are counterparts, that they must in the nature of things work together ; that the natural is a working model of the spiritual. In the spiritual world, says the author, the same wheels revolve, but without the iron ; the same figures flit across the stage, the same processes go on, the same functions are discharged, the same biological laws prevail, only with a different quality of Bios.

" The earth is crammed with Heaven  
And every common bush afire with God."

The universe in all acceptations is one, and therefore must be in harmony with itself. There must be continuity in the entire action of its forces. This appears in gravitation ; in its centripetal and centrifugal motions, in its revolutions of planets and suns around their respective centres. How has it been possible heretofore to draw a line of separation, as to where the mode of action on material things ends, and spiritual laws take their place ? Would we not be relieved of a great difficulty by accepting Prof. Drummond's theory ? Since he emphatically affirms that " the reign of law will transform the whole spiritual world, as it has transformed, to us already, the natural world. That living in the spiritual world is just as simple as living in the natural world, and it is the same kind of simplicity, for it is the same kind of a world —there are not two kinds of world—the conditions of life in the one are the conditions of life in the other."

It is a supposable case that there has been a time when persons have been frightened by the intervention of a dark body between them and their orb of day, but Science now dispels any such fear for us by explanation, and showing what is taking place. Now there are sundry huge, dark bodies between us and the light of spiritual things. Can they be moved out of the way, or shown to be legitimately there in obedience to the law in the case, and that seeing clearly, relates to our standpoint of observation ? Our author is fearful on this point of speaking of law, lest some of his readers may be ill-furnished enough to confound *law* with substance, which would lead to an immediate rejection of the argument ; so in his name I confirm what has already been said, by reiterating the idea that the *laws* are *not* the movers, the essences, the energies. A law has nothing to do with potencies.

The law of continuity, as a prominent factor in this enquiry, is involved in the plea for natural law in the spiritual sphere. Let the author's precise statement be followed here :

" Briefly indicated, the ground taken up is this : that if nature be a harmony, man in all his relations—physical, mental, moral and spiritual, falls to be included within its circle. It is altogether unlikely that man, spiritual, should be violently separated in all the conditions of growth, development and life, from man physical. It is difficult to conceive that one set of principles should guide the Natural life, and then at a certain period, the very point at which they are needed, suddenly give place to another set of principles altogether new and unrelated. Nature has never taught us to expect such a catastrophe. She has nowhere prepared for it, and man cannot, in the nature of things, in the nature of thought, in the nature of language, be separated into two such incoherent halves.

The spiritual man, it is true, is to be studied in a different department of science from the natural man, but the harmony established by science is not a harmony within specific depart-

ments. It is the universe that is in harmony—the universe of which these are the parts. Man, then, at any stage of existence, is not to be deprived of the conveniences of living. When no longer requiring the use of a material instrument (a body) he is not afloat ; he is not all to pieces. True beings, spiritual beings, are not sundered for such causes. The terror of the oft-repeated question : "Shall we know each other there?" will have lost its former significance ; and that other query : "With what body do they come?" will cease to perplex, with an insight into the nature of what we are doing as spirits—when we body forth in any sphere, seeing authoritatively that "there are bodies natural, spiritual, terrestrial and celestial," which affirmation may be placed in correspondence with the respective spheres they are supposed to inhabit.

But, notwithstanding the indicated extension of these natural laws into the spiritual world, the veil of mystery, as ever, remains unbroken away. Still, "it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive," and this is shown to be a scientific necessity. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God : *neither can he know them*, because they are spiritually discerned."

Though a denizen from the equator of the highest sphere be dispatched to us of the lower sphere, the messenger could not adequately convey the knowledge of its constituents and movements, and for obvious reasons. We understand no spiritual language, and there are no objects here with which heavenly ones could be compared. If the *great mysteries* should be revealed, we should not be able to understand them unless new faculties should be opened. So they must always remain remote from human comprehension while man is limited to mortal vision. I quote from the author : "But in the meantime, there is much to define on the surface. The clearness, as well as the definiteness of the testimony of nature to any spiritual truth, is of immense importance when men are offering us a Christianity without a living spirit, and a personal religion without *conversion* ; no emphasis or reiteration of spiritual truth can be too extreme. A new theology has laughed at the doctrine of conversion. Sudden conversion, especially, has been ridiculed as untrue to philosophy and impossible to human nature. We may not be concerned," continued the author, "in buttressing any theology because it is old ; but we may find that this old theology is scientific. Regeneration has not merely been an outstanding difficulty but an overwhelming obscurity. Philosophically, one scarcely sees either the necessity or the possibility of being born again. Why a virtuous man should not grow better and better till in his own right he enters the Kingdom of God, is what thousands honestly and seriously fail to understand." (I think the author here alludes to Boston theology, as there is no other city where one or a dozen new births is not a necessity). The author continues : "The natural man is endowed simply with a high quality of the natural animal life, but it is life of so poor a quality that it is not life at all." "He that hath not the son *hath not life* : but he that hath the son hath life, a new, and distinct, and supernatural endowment. He is not of this world, he is of the timeless state of eternity." It is not within the scope of my aim to follow this line of thought (introduced in the last two paragraphs) to any conclusion, but this digression is made toward the "great mysteries" that my author may not be understood as teaching a low down faith or religion.

If it be asked, what will be gained if the point, "introduction of natural law in the spiritual world," be made plausible and reasonable to entertain, it is answered that theology would then accord with the authority of revelation, and at the same time with the sciences of nature. What is desired is a unity of conception. The scientific demand of the age will be

in a manner satisfied. That is : the demand that all that concerns life and conduct shall be placed on a scientifically-knowing basis.

Mr. Huxley, as cited by the author, says : "If any one be able to make good the assertion that his theology rests upon valid evidence and sound reasoning, then it appears that such theology must take its place as a part of science (or knowing). Mr. Frederic Harrison is also referred to, as defining the want in these words : "Life and conduct shall stand for us wholly on a basis of law, and must rest entirely in that region of science (not physical, but moral and social science) where we are free to use our intelligence in the methods known to us as intelligible logic."

What is wanted is a unity of conception, but not such a unity of conception as should be founded on an absolute identity of phenomena in the two systems of things—the scientific and the theological. This latter might be a unity, but it would be a tame one. The perfection of unity is attained when there is an infinite variety of phenomena—*infinite complexity of relation, but great simplicity of law*, says Prof. Drummond.

It must be understood, that it is not the intention of the author to let down the spiritual standards of estimation, but to elevate the physical plane of knowing, or show its harmony in the working of the factors of the universe. In his own words : "Let it not be thought that the scientific treatment of a spiritual subject, has reduced religion to a problem of Physics, or demonstrated God by the laws of Biology. Now, receive Prof. Drummond's verdict in the case, as to whether you will, after all, accept his theory, and a stanza from Mr. Browning, with which he concludes the preface to his book.

The author says : "to those who already find themselves fully nourished in the older forms of truth, I do not command these pages. They will find them superfluous. Nor is there any reason why they should mingle with light which is already clear the distorting rays of foreign expression. But to those who are feeling their way to a Christian life, haunted now by a sense of instability in the foundations of their faith, now brought to bay by specific doubt at one point, raising, as all doubt does, the question of the whole, I would hold up a light which has often been kind to me."

"I speak as I saw,  
I report as a man may, of God's work.  
All's love, yet all's law,  
Now I lay down the judgeship He lent me,  
Each faculty tasked,  
To perceive Him, has gained an abyss  
When a dew-drop was asked."

#### MARSILIO FICINO :

AND THE CAUSES OF THE RESTORATION OF PLATONISM IN THE  
FOURTH CENTURY, B. C.

(From the Italian of Luigi Ferri.)

BY VIRGINIA CHAMPLIN.

Among the Philosophical doctrines restored during the time of the Renaissance Platonism was more prominent than any of the others. The reasons for this are found in the circumstances amidst which the Platonic doctrine was revived in the West ; for the natural disposition of the Italian mind had as much to do with this as external events. We will make a brief survey of the situation.

It is seen with what ardor the Italians of the first half of the fifteenth century tried to remodel culture in every direction after the classic type of Rome and Greece. Carried

away by the enthusiasm of the early Humanists the majority of their most distinguished men of talent forgot the power of the native language of Dante and thought and wrote in that of Latium ; thus a new Latin literature appeared and emulated the antique. Nor did this extraordinary love for the classic have Form for its sole object ; because notwithstanding the great change that had taken place in ideas and society, our literary men sincerely believed that they had again found in the works of the classics of the fourth century, B. C., the purest essence of the national spirit and the perfect image of civilisation.

The love of the ideal, the worship of the humanities and universal nature of society accompanied the admiration of the Italians of that time for antiquity, and was determined and exalted by the profound study of their writers and public buildings. In general the development of the æsthetic sentiment and the impulse toward imitation were so great that the opinion prevailed that there was no other way to reach the source of the True and Beautiful. The beautiful more than the true, the antique even more than the beautiful, or rather the true by means of the beautiful, and the beautiful by means of the antique, was more than any other the chosen object, and I may venture to say the more exact form of human thought in the time of the Renaissance—a period besides so varied in its aspects and so fertile that it cannot be correctly described in a few and abstract words. We will content ourselves with recognising and pointing out a few of them.

The Renaissance is divided into two distinct historical currents of thoughts and deeds ; one precedes modern times, springs from needs and ideas unknown to the ancients and impels human thought toward the future ; another takes it back to the past, but to a past that reclaims civilisation in its beginnings, and comes forth again reformed, and in a certain sense, wholly new. Many times, in fact almost always, the two currents met and mingled in the same court, the same city, the same school, the same man and in the same book. The principal office of the historian is to make this understood, distinguishing the character, relationship and causes.

Even Marsilio Ficino has a place in this union ; for in him also the old and new course meet and blend ; since while he translated Platô and Plotinus and spent his life in making commentaries upon them, he coöperated energetically in diminishing the power of Aristotle upon thought ; and while his study of Latin elegance places him justly among the most illustrious imitators of antiquity, the breadth of his theology unites his spirit in boldness to Cardinal di Cusa, and the free doctrines of Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella.

No one is unaware that the opposition to scholastic Aristotelism dates back to Francesco Petrarch ; and from him also began in the time of the Restoration the movement toward the restoration of Platonism. This is not the place to quote from his works the numerous proofs of this assertion, which besides has already been done many times ; and much less is it possible for me to make even passing mention of the doctrines of Scoto Erigena, Anselmo Aosta, and Bonaventura da Bagnorea, the principal Platonists of the Middle Ages, and in the general order of doctrines, precursors of Marsilio's attempt. The antecedents of the event which I am about to narrate are too numerous for me to describe, or even to enumerate them all. Among those that have a predominant character the need of combatting Aristotle and the scholastic philosophy is without doubt one of the most important, but it is not the only one. The intense love of classic form, the study of the æsthetic types, the desire for perfection in culture and art naturally attracted in the changing course of their influence the doctrine that raises ideas above reality as the necessary fulfilling and almost the confirmation of the dom-

inant culture ; and the capital of Tuscany more than any other part of Italy, was adapted to be the seat of the new Platonism, since the works of the great artists and writers had done more there than elsewhere to educate souls to enjoy the beautiful, and had prepared minds to hear the explanation of a philosophy, which in the dramatic dialogues of its founder is wonderful poetry and at the same time a finished dialect. Another general cause of the return of Platonism is to be found, as in every great intellectual movement, in the inevitable contrast of the two opposite tendencies. Minds are always divided ; one of them being directed to Idealism and the other to Realism. Implanted together in our nature and incapable nevertheless of satisfying it separately, they arise together, but opposed one to the other—and contribute to progress by the means of an antithesis and a synthesis whose alternating never ceases.

To the skeptical formulas concerning the Soul which Realism assumed during the first half of the fourth century in Aristotelism, expounded by the boldest followers of Averroes and Alessandro Afrodisiense, to those far more material formulas invested with the Epicureanism of Valla and the strange espousal of Christianity, would be naturally opposed the protests and arguments of a doctrine which combatted them in the name of the sentiments rejected or injured by them. Meanwhile in the clashing of the two forms of culture that were contending for the dominion of minds between the mediæval that was declining, and the modern spirit that was rising above the need of research and the free study of classic antiquity, faith was shaken ; old rancors against the ambition and worldliness of the Church of Rome were renewed with greater strength and were only too well justified by facts ; and the ill feeling being increased by the doubtful state of ideas was transformed into ridicule. Religion having degenerated into a pompous and material worship was hardly distinguished from an earthly power, and through an enfeebled consciousness of its destinies, was constantly losing its salutary influence upon souls. To these evils Platonism could be applied as a remedy. It had served the Holy Fathers in their polemics against the Gentiles ; and it could be of use to the new apologists of skepticism and the rising Paganism. Ficino recalls the words of Augustine, that, with a few changes, Platonism would be Christianity ; and they meet in fact and are in harmony upon essential dogmas, in a true end as in the excess of certain tendencies. A notable analogy, which the historical critic of to-day partly explains by the influence of Hellenism upon the origin of Christian ideas exists between the Spiritualism of Platô and that of the Evangelists, between the words of St. John and the Demiurgos of the *Timaios*. Thus the monastic asceticism and the Christian scorn of the world find in the exaggerated mysticism of a few Platonic Dialogues a point of contact that indicates a close relationship of aims and doctrines.

These considerations had no influence upon all cultivated minds, nor in equal degree upon those who were disposed to value them. However, they were not without some benefit.

I must not linger upon this subject but will draw your attention to other aspects of the important historical phenomenon which I am about to explain.

I would specialise another relation between the state of minds in the second half of the fourth century and that of philosophic geniuses in the third or fourth century after Christ. Thus, as in the decline of the Roman-Greek civilisation, it happens that the philosophers of Alexandria trying to save it, and to reconcile the ideal principles with those of the rising Christian society, and demanding of Platonism the basis of a new philosophic synthesis, sought to form with the traditions and doctrines of the East and Greece, a system as broad as

humanity and universal civilisation. So there were in the fourth century some philosophers, who carrying or receiving from Italy Platonism already developed and modified by the Alexandrians, showed the aspirations of those thinkers, and amidst conditions not very dissimilar, welcomed like thoughts and views.

To tell the truth, if we consider well the ends, we find some diametrically opposed rather than similar; since the lay Alexandrian philosophers aimed to preserve Pagan civilisation and overthrow the dominion of Christianity defended by the Fathers, while Italian Platonists of the fourth century in general sustained the cause of the Christian religion against religious skepticism and revived Paganism; but notwithstanding this great difference of position, there was a remarkable analogy between the two philosophic movements; for in both epochs there was an effort to blend culture and doctrines with the same organ. The Neo-Platonists of the fourth century are neither Pagans like those of Alexandria, nor Orthodox like the Greek Fathers, their adversaries; but to a certain point they united aspirations, giving the predominance to Christian ideas. And if one reflects on the course of events that surrounded them and the civilised atmosphere in which our predecessors lived, one will judge that to their lofty intellect an Alexandrian Eclecticism would seem a necessity of the times. For if in the third or fourth century of the era the Roman-Greek civilisation feared the intellectual invasion of Christianity, at the time of the fall of Constantinople the Christian civilisation feared the devastating invasion of Islamism; and if Bessarion in the dispute between the Greek fugitives on the pre-eminence of Aristotle and Platonism, preferred Plato to Aristotle, for his merits in regard to religion and for the connection of his philosophy with Christian dogmas, we do not forget that Gemisto Pletone, following in his method in the traces of Iamblichos and other Alexandrians, conceived and already preached a religion in which Christianity and Mahometanism were to be blended with Polytheism. Cardinal di Cusa and Marsilio Ficino, contemporaries of Gemisto, did not fall into this excess; but interpreted the prevailing religion in the broadest manner and the most conducive to the peace of the sects, to the adjusting of theological contrasts, and to the reconstruction of a more comprehensive and suitable religious unity.

Without these observations, it seems to me, it would be impossible to understand with any degree of exactness what was most general and essential in the internal and external causes, speculative and practical, of the rising Platonism.

Let us pass now to more particular causes and distinguish three among them: the coming of a few Greek philosophers to Italy; the designs of *Cosmo il Vecchio*, and the influence of the House of Medici; finally, the character and vocation of Marsilio Ficino.

Enough has been said about the coming of the Greek fugitives to Italy, and I do not wish to repeat what has been recorded so many times about the reunion of the Council of Florence in 1439 by the union of the two Greek and Latin churches, the Platonic discourses of Gemisto Pletone, celebrated as a new Plato and present at that synod, and the dispute that took place later between him and Georgio da Trebisonda in regard to Plato and Aristotle, in which Michele Apostoli Teodoro Gaza, Genadio Scolari, etc., took part. These disputes were to some of the cultivated Italians a revelation and impulse. They saw that Aristotle was not the only great doctrine that had prevailed in Philosophy; they perceived that there was another worthy of emulating it by its historical and scientific importance, and capable of surpassing it by the lofty explanation that it gave of the prin-

ples of the Good and Beautiful; therefore they desired to study and know it. The thought of restoring it arose in the mind of *Cosmo il Vecchio*, where it matured and in time bore fruit.

It is narrated, that on hearing Gemisto Pletone discourse with eloquence on the Platonic doctrine, he turned his mind toward making it flourish in Italy. Such a design was no doubt was united in him to the ambition of raising his own glory above that of other Italian princes by the means of renewing the studies by which he believed he could assure a splendid future; nor did he deceive himself, and perhaps was more resolved upon his plan by thinking of the means by which the Florentine Republic could compete with Venetian in intellectual matters; since schools at Padua supported and protected by the Venetian Senate, were devoted to Aristotle and Peripatetic philosophy, no less constantly than the Republic to its aristocratical course. So Florence alone with Platonism could contend for philosophical supremacy with Aristotleised Padua, and the no less Aristotleised Bologna. But a man appeared who was capable of carrying out the design of Cosmo. Let us see who he was. I am not writing a biography. I am simply making a few remarks about the principal features in the life and character of Marsilio Ficino, those which are most connected with his destiny as a restorer of Neo-Platonism; a task made easy for me by a very accurate biographical work full of details, by the lawyer Leopold Galeotti, published in the Italian *Historical Archives* of 1859.

Marsilio was born on the 31st of October, 1433, in Figline, in upper Valdarno; and his parents were Alessandra de' Montevarchi and Diotefici called Ficino, a celebrated surgeon who came to practice his profession in Florence and attended the House of Medici. He pursued his studies successively in Florence and Pisa, then at Florence and Bologna from 1446 to 1456. At Florence and Pisa he first paid attention to letters; and at Florence and Bologna he studied philosophy and medicine. His father destined him for a physician, but he felt called to another career, and Cosmo de' Medici, to whom he was one day taken by his father, fortunately came to his aid by preventing delay in his plans and overcoming his father's aversion. "Cosmo," says Corsi, one of Ficino's biographers, "seeing the modesty of the youth, and knowing his ardor for study, greatly delighted in it, as if the thought had come into his mind that here was just the person whom he had intended should illustrate the philosophy of Platô. Therefore calling his father to him, he advised him in no way to oppose his son in his studies. He would not listen to the excuse of limited means, for he promised to provide for him liberally and never forsake him. "You, Ficino," he added, "are destined to cure bodies, but your Marsilio has been called by heaven to cure souls." This visit and conversation determined Marsilio's future.

From 1456 to 1463 he succeeded in learning the Greek language and making himself a complete master of it. He was aided in this not only by his unwavering will, keen intelligence and love of philosophy, to which his labors were principally directed, but even by the degree of progress and the *apogee*, as it were, which this study had reached in Florence.

We have elsewhere recorded that toward the second half of the fourteenth century Leonzio Pilato, the master of Boccaccio, through his illustrious friend and pupil had been invited by the nobility of Florence to teach Greek in that city, and that at the end of the same century, in 1397, Manuele Crisolora also came there to teach it. From the school of these men came many Hellenists, among whom Leonardi Bruni Aretino, Giannozzo Manetti, Palla Strozzi, Carlo Marsuppini, Pozzio Bracciolini, Ambrogio Traversari, Nicolo Nicoli acquired great fame by important works. The love for the Greek language reached such a point that the young lords learned it as

to-day they learn French or English; and Pontano left behind him writings stating that the chief praise due the Florentines was for bringing Latin writers from oblivion, and cultivating Greek literature to such an extent that they did not spare expense to bring those who were masters of it to Florence; and Poliziano narrates with some emphasis, that even children spoke Greek so well and so quickly, that it seemed as if he was in Athens rather than in Florence.

It is not extraordinary that in an intellectual atmosphere wholly embued as it were with Hellenism, Ficino should perfectly master the Greek language in a few years, and it is not necessary to seek to ascertain who were his teachers in this study, since he frequented the house of Medici, and as all the illustrious Greek and Italian literati in Florence met there.

We can, however, by following in the tracks of his biographers, and consulting the history of Florentine and Bolognese study, state with some approach to accuracy who were his instructors in philosophy; but no light fell upon his vocation and future from the almost obscure names we might quote. His true masters were Platô and Plotinos whom he read when hardly thirty years old, from manuscripts given him by *Cosmo il Vecchio*\* and he was truly worthy of being their pupil.

Thus even we cannot help mentioning his first attempts at a version from the Greek of the *Argonautika* of Apollonios Rhodios, the *Theogony* of Hésiod, the *Hymns* of Proklos, Orpheus and Hômer, if only to show his extraordinary activity in this kind of works, and his disposition to become a great scholar. With these exercises he prepared himself for translations of Platô, and among them was included the interpretation of the *Laws* of this philosopher.

He was resolutely preparing himself for this arduous undertaking when Cosmo, being advised by his friends, and particularly by Cristoforo Landino, thought him already sufficiently prepared, that is, toward 1463. We gladly unite these two names, Cosmo and Ficino in our recollection, because the history of the Restoration shows them united, and because although we are not ignorant of the evil of which the House of Medici was too often guilty, we are not the less eager to render him justice when his influence appears to us to be favorably bestowed upon the cause of science and civilisation. For Cosmo not only had the merit of discovering the aptitude of Ficino, of deciding his vocation and watching over its fulfilment; but he also protected and prospered him with his gifts and constant solicitude; and there are proofs that he did not hesitate to present him with a house in the city in *Via San Egidio*, and a villa at Careggi, which Marsilio received from his generous protector and to which he responded with ardor by indefatigable work; therefore to fulfil his desire, in a few months he translated the apocryphal writings that were then attributed to Hermès Trismegistus, and before dying Cosmo could have him read the desired Latin versions of several of Platô's books, and among others that of the dialogue of *Philebos* or the *Highest Good*.

"My most ardent desire," Cosmo wrote him in the summer of 1464, "is to find the easiest road to happiness. Come, and do not forget Orpheus' lyre."†

Marsilio took the Dialogue to Careggi and read it as request-

\*The manuscript books of Platô and Plotinos were already among the legacies obtained by Greece from Aurispa, through Ambrogio Traversari and his friends in the first half of the century.

†See Ficino's *Letters*, book I., 2d letter, (from Cosmo to Ficino) another one from Ficino to Lorenzo the Magnificent, on p. 648 of vol. I., of the edition of Ficino's works, Basiba, 1876. This last letter, quoted more fully elsewhere, shows that Lorenzo was present at the reading of the *Philebos*. He was then between fourteen and fifteen years old.

ed; and it is not without a certain emotion that the historian sees, thus to express it, the famous founder of the Medicean power, weakened by age and labor, ennobling his repose by the loftiest philosophic meditations and seeking in the doctrine of Ideas food for a mind weary of earthly grandeur. We will not belittle history with party spirit. Cosmo, who, in the last days of his life discoursed with Ficino on the Highest Good, was not a tyrant who embellished the chains of his subjects with the flowers of a servile philosophy, but a great practical genius who after trying the vanity of human things and the fleeting joys of this life, lifted his mind to the Ideal and turned his thoughts to the Infinite.

"I philosophised with him more than twelve years," Ficino wrote in his *Letters*; "and he was as subtle in dispute as he was prudent and strong in government. I owe much to Platô, but no less to Cosmo, because he showed me in practice the virtues which Plato showed me in theory. I will say this if nothing else, that he was as avariciously sparing of time as Midas was of gold; and while he measured days and hours, and economised even minutes, he often deplored his loss of time. Finally he adds in his letter directed to Lorenzo de' Medici, that having philosophised to a remarkable extent all his life, and even in the midst of the gravest business, in the very days in which he passed from darkness to light, he philosophised more than ever.

Piero succeeded Cosmo, then Lorenzo and Giuliano, sons of the former, in the principality and even in the plans and patronage bestowed by the grandfather upon Ficino; so that all his life he not only benefitted by the power and splendor, but even the particular good will of the House of Medici in regard to him. I do not know that there is a more notable example in History of the influence of a princely family upon the fate of a philosophic intellect. For though Ficino was the master of Lorenzo and Giuliano and manifested to Cosmo, their grandfather, the profound speculations of the Platonic Doctrine, certainly their treatment of him was very noble. Being protected by the Medici, he could not only live without being stinted, but by not exercising any lucrative profession, he consecrated himself to the slow and laborious undertaking of divulging the philosophy of Platô and the Platonists by means of translations and explanations of their works, to the composition of original writings, and to teaching for many years. By Cosmo even his vocation was decided, the order of his studies regulated, and the design of the Academy, for which he was proposed, conceived; by Lorenzo he was advised to become a priest, the better to secure an easy existence, by the means of the benefice and canonship that were then conceded to him; his Florentine studies were directed by Lorenzo in a manner to influence literary and philosophic instruction, and to be more closely connected with the rise of Platonic philosophy; by Lorenzo, finally, Cosmo's design was completed,—assured, that is, with the continuance of Ficino's mission and the rise of Platonism. Then the Academy was opened after nearly a thousand years of silence; having been closed in Athens by Justinian, and by the royal banquets of the Medicean towns, raised to the summit of worldly pomp yet not devoid of poesy and splendor. This makes me think that the influence of the Medici on Ficino was greater than that of Ficino on the Medici; nor, I think, will it be disputed that whoever distinguishes in them the prince from the man, will recognise ever so little their ruling in political and private matters; and often their life harmonised with the purest archetypes of good and justice, of which they admired the ideal principles in the writings and teachings of him in whom enthusiastic contemporaries saw Platô revived.

(To be continued.)

## THE INITIATION OF PLATO.

By some mistake the introduction prepared by me to Mr. Yarker's translation was omitted in the last number of THE PLATONIST, and it is offered again hoping a more fortunate result.

## THE INITIATION OF PLATO.

TRANSLATED BY JOHN YARKER, 33°, 90-96°.

"*The Initiation of Plato* is a translation of the prologue to a French comedy entitled: *The Freemason*, and is published in *The Kneph* (London) for February, 1884. It is designed to set forth the Sacerdotal Mysteries of Egypt and the ancient Initiations. The reader of *The Epicurean*, by Thomas Moore, will understand it with little difficulty. It may be well to bear in mind that the Ancient Faiths of Asia, Egypt and the West, were preserved in their essential features and commemorated in the secret rites. Hence, only the worthy, the noble and eminent in intellect, were admitted to the full knowledge of the Mystic Worship; all others were excluded outright, or inducted into minor orgies. 'It seems to have been a very generally-received opinion among the more discreet heathens,' says R. Payne Knight, 'that Divine Truth was better adapted to the weakness of the human intellect when veiled under symbols and wrapped in fable and enigma, than when exhibited in the undisguised simplicity of genuine wisdom and pure philosophy.' Hence, ancient literature was allegorical. It generally pertained to religion and intellectual concepts, and material or sensible terms were used with reference to an occult interior meaning. In due time, nevertheless, as the veneration for antique customs diminished, the sages and philosophers ventured to eliminate their dogmas from the mass of ritual and to teach them unencumbered by extraneous matter. The Mysteries appear to have generally consisted of dramatic representations relating to trials, death and resuscitation or restoration to home and happiness. They were in due time supplemented by the ancient Theatre itself, always a religious sanctuary, and so became more or less popularised. Thus we may perceive that worship was anterior to philosophic learning, and that the Drama was the outcome of the two.—A. W."

It would be assuming, indeed, asking too much to expect this little piece to be considered as closely assimilating the forms of the Antique Rites. These were too closely veiled ever to become thus familiarly known. It is safe, however, to regard the delineation as sufficiently accurate to afford a fair conception of what the higher initiations comprehended.

The persons of the Drama, as given in *The Initiation of Plato*, are as follows: The KING of Egypt; the DEMIURGOS; the *Kerux*, or Herald; PLATO; ZAIS and AZEMA, daughters of the King; an *Alma* or sacred woman; *women of the Temple* as dancers. SCENE—*Egypt*.

## THE AMERICAN AKADÈMÈ.

The tenth meeting of the American Akadémè was held at the usual place, Jacksonville, Illinois, on Tuesday evening, May 20th, 1884. It was largely attended, not only by resident members, but others from abroad, as well as by numerous visitors. The journal was read and approved. Fifteen new members were elected. It should be noted that twenty-two were elected in March, and ten in April, making one hundred and eighty in all.

A few lines, entitled *Questions*, written by a resident member, were read by the Secretary.

Mr. Wolcott, of Jacksonville, read a paper on *Evolution*. The discussion which followed resulted in a very full presentation of the theories of modern scientists, and those which the world has been accustomed to entertain. Mr. Wolcott ably defended his views against a general outburst of dissent.

Several speakers congratulated him for his assertion that what is not scientifically known is absolutely *not* known at all. One member went so far as to say: "All scholarly minds accept the theory of Evolution. The theological mind, I think, also accepts it."

This statement was stoutly controverted by several clergymen present, who declared it not borne out by facts. "Mr. Darwin cannot be considered as the originator of a science," said one; "but simply as the propounder of an hypothesis."

Many suggestive questions were asked, such as the following: 1. "Can life ever be truly said to originate from not-life?" 2. "Does the theory of Evolution explain the whole Universe?" 3. "Is every particle of matter supposed to be endowed with all power in itself to become life?"

THE PRESIDENT.—It is said in the Hebrew Scriptures: "God formed man of the dust of the ground"—

MR. WOLCOTT.—That is just what the Evolutionists claim.

PRESIDENT.—"And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." This is not declared of the lower animals. I cannot agree with the essayist, that there has been nothing worthy of the name of free science till the last two hundred years. I can find sufficient proof that the Greeks knew what we know, and suppose to have been so lately discovered concerning the Circulation of the Blood and the Nervous System. The science of an age is not the source of its civilisation. Science does not make history or create civilisation. It is the progeny and not the parent of Faith. The Faith of every age is the source of its Science, Philosophy and Art. Faith is first, science and the arts come afterward. The Art of the Middle Ages is the offering of the Christian Faith previously existing.

MR. WOLCOTT.—Free Science is not two hundred years old. The burning of Bruno, the torturing of Galileo, and the imprisonment of Roger Bacon, are evidences of the bondage of Science in the Middle Ages.

MR. CAMPBELL.—We must distinguish between the fruits of theological priesthood and the legitimate and historic fruits of religious faith. We still draw the main inspiration of life from the great ages of the Past. We do not yet live as near to the source of life as did the Greeks, or the great ones of the Elizabethan period.

The decision of the majority was that the doctrine of Evolution can in no wise be accepted, till certain gaps which are still yawning widely are successfully bridged over.

The discussion was admirably conducted; every one was zealous and very earnest, and thoughtful words were spoken.

Plutarch gives the following summary of genuine culture: "To worship the gods, to honor our parents, to yield due respect to older persons, to be submissive to the laws, to obey our governors, to use sobriety towards our consorts, to be affectionate to our children, and not to treat servants and inferiors with insolence; and more than these, not to be overjoyed in prosperity, nor too much dejected in adversity, not to be disorderly in pleasure, nor transported with brutish rage and fury when angry."

# AN AMERICAN BOARD OF CONTROL

Established by Order of the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society.

LONDON, May 13, 1884.

## SPECIAL ORDERS OF 1884.

Several applications for power to form Branches of the Society, in the United States of America, having been received, the following Rule is issued:

Mr. William B. Shelley, President, and Mrs. Josephine W. Cables, Secretary, of the Rochester Theosophical Society, Rochester, N. Y., and Mr. George Frederic Parsons, of New York city, are appointed members of the General Council to fill vacancies caused by the departure from America of Mr. W. Q. Judge, and the non-acceptance of Mr. M. M. Marble; and Mr. Elliott B. Page, of St. Louis, Missouri, and Mr. Thomas M. Johnson, of Osceola, St. Clair county, Missouri, are appointed additional members of the same. The above five, with Major-Gen. Abner Doubleday, U. S. A., and Prof. J. D. Buck, M. D., of Cincinnati, Ohio, to constitute a Board of Control for America, and have charge of the general direction of the Theosophical movement in that part of the World. They are hereby empowered to admit and initiate applicants, and by consent of a majority grant temporary charters for new Branches without preliminary reference to Headquarters. Applications for charters from parties east of the Allegheny mountains to be made to Mrs. J. W. Cables, and those from persons residing in the territory west of the said mountains to be made to Mr. E. B. Page, for submission in each case to their colleagues of the Board of Control.

As soon as practicable after receipt of this order, the members of the Board shall agree upon a Chairman and Secretary, through which latter officer a monthly return shall be made to the Recording Secretary of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras, of the Board's transactions; including reports of all charters issued, and new members admitted. The return must be accompanied by the application and obligation forms properly filled, and a draft on London for the initiation fees. By the first returning mail receipts will be sent direct to the new members for their fees, and charters forwarded to the Secretary of the Board of Control for transmission to the parties interested. Each new Branch must empower at least one of its members to go to the member of the Board of Control residing nearest to them, for instruction and initiation. He can then initiate the President of his Branch, who thenceforth will be empowered to initiate his colleagues and future applicants during the term of his office. His successors to have the same authority during their respective official terms.

The Board shall keep an accurate register of all American Branches and their members, but the contents shall not be divulged to any non-members without the written permission of the President-Founder. A membership register shall be kept by each Branch after the original plan adopted at Headquarters, particulars of which can be obtained through the Secretary of the Board.

To defray the petty expenses of the Board, for postage, printing, etc., a small per capita assessment should be annually voted by each American Branch.

(Signed)

H. S. OLCOTT,

*President Theosophical Society.*

A true copy:

Attest: M. M. CHATTERJE, *Private Secretary.*

# THE PLATONIST.

*PUBLISHED MONTHLY.*

## An Exponent of the Philosophic Truth.

Edited by THOS. M. JOHNSON.

**The Platonist is devoted chiefly to the dissemination of the Platonic Philosophy in all its phases.**

In this degenerated age, when the senses are apotheosised, when materialism is absurdly denominated Philosophy, folly and ignorance popularised, and the dictum: "Get money, eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die," exemplifies the actions of millions of mankind, there certainly is a necessity for a journal which shall be a candid, bold, and fearless exponent of the Platonic Philosophy—a philosophy totally subversive of sensualism, materialism, folly and ignorance. This philosophy recognises the essential immortality and divinity of the Human Soul, and posits its highest happiness as an approximation to and union with the Absolute One. Its mission is: to release the soul from the bonds of matter, to lead it to the vision of true being,—from images to realities,—and, in short, to elevate it from a sensible to an intellectual life.

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THOMAS M. JOHNSON,

Osceola, St. Clair County, Missouri.

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